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SUBJECT: JAPANESE MORNING PRESS HIGHLIGHTS 10/28/09

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1) TOP HEADLINES

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should lead to fundamental reform of medical services
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Mainichi:

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Yomiuri:

(1) Change in makeup of Central Social Insurance Medical Council:
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(1) Can Central Social Insurance Medical Council transform itself
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(1) Exclusion of Japan Medical Association from Central Social
Insurance Medical Council should lead to rebuilding of medical
service system
(2) Abduction issue: Japan, U.S., South Korea should cooperate for
former North Korean Workers Party secretary Hwang's visit to Japan

Tokyo Shimbun:

(1) Change in makeup of Central Social Insurance Medical Council
should reflect a variety of opinions
(2) Emissions rights trading: Rush to design domestic market

Akahata:

(1) ASEAN urged to increase presence as community

3) Prime Minister's schedule, Oct. 27

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 28, 2009

09:07 Attended a meeting of the abduction issue taskforce at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei), followed by a cabinet meeting.

10:57 Made an informal representation at the Imperial Palace.

12:59 Met at the Kantei with gymnasts, including Kohei Uchimura.

14:00 Met Upper House member Yoshihiro Kawakami, followed by Chishima and Habomai inlanders' league president Toshio Koizumi and others. Later met Vice Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Matsushita, Parliamentary Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Kira, and Parliamentary Secretary for Finance Ogushi.

15:39 Met Upper House member Masamitsu Oishi.

16:04 Met Cabinet Office Vice Minister Furukawa.

18:53 Met Finance Minister Okada and Deputy Foreign Minister Otabe.

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21:17 Arrived at his private residence.

4) MSDF destroyer collides with South Korean-registered ship and catches fire in Kanmon Strait

MAINICHI (Top play) (Excerpts)
October 28, 2009

The Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer Kurama (Captain Masatoshi Kashiwara, 5,200 tons), sailing west, collided with the South Korean-registered container ship Carina Star (7,401 tons), sailing east, and caught fire around 7:56 p.m. on Oct. 27 in the Kanmon Strait between Moji Ward, Kitakyushu City, and Shimonoseki City, Yamaguchi Prefecture. Although the fire on the container ship was extinguished shortly afterward, fire fighting on the Kurama continued until early this morning. The 7th Regional Japan Coast Guard Headquarters will carefully investigate the cause of the collision especially with regard to whether there was professional negligence.

Of the Kurama's 297 crewmembers, three on lookout reportedly sustained minor injuries but none of the 16 container ship crewmembers (12 South Koreans and four Myanmar (Burmese)) suffered injuries.

The accident occurred on the east side of the Kanmonkyo Bridge, with the Kurama's bow striking the container ship's starboard bow. The Kurama's bow was badly damaged, and the area beside the storage room for paint drums and other materials burst into flames. A hole was opened in the container ship's bow, and its cargo caught fire. The Kurama's ammunition storeroom did not catch fire.

Defense minister apologizes

At the Defense Ministry on the evening of Oct. 27 Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa held a news conference at which he offered an apology, saying, "It is truly regrettable that we caused concern and inconvenience." Kitazawa has sent Senior Vice-Defense Minister Kazuya Shimba to assess the situation.

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama ordered Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano and others to swiftly collect information on the night of Oct. 27. The government has set up an information liaison office at the Crisis Management Center in the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei).

5) "South Korean ship was obligated to avert the collision," according to senior government source

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Full)
October 28, 2009

The Maritime Self-Defense Force's destroyer Kurama and a South Korean container ship collided last night. A government source indicated that the responsibility for the incident rested with the South Korean ship, the Carina Star, saying: "The South Korean ship

was reportedly obligated to avert the incident." He also said:
"There was concern about the possibility of an incident because the
temperature in the ammunition chamber climbed," indicating that
there was a danger of the ammunition chamber catching fire.

6) LDP to submit cargo inspection bill today at current Diet

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session

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 28, 2009

The main opposition Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) General Council yesterday agreed to submit a bill to facilitate cargo inspections of ships heading to and from North Korea during the ongoing extraordinary session of the Diet. The LDP is now asking opposition parties such as the New Komeito and Your Party to jointly submit the bill. It intends to submit the bill on Oct. 28 after receiving answers from the other opposition parties.

7) Defense chief accepts Henoko plan for Futenma relocation

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Abridged)
Eve., October 27, 2009

Defense Minister Kitazawa has clarified his intention to accept the current plan to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture to a coastal area of Camp Schwab, a U.S. military base located at Henoko in the island prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago. The plan is based on an intergovernmental agreement reached between Japan and the United States. The ruling Democratic Party of Japan, in its manifesto for this summer's election for the House of Representatives, pledged to move Futenma airfield out of Japan or Okinawa Prefecture. "Some people may think the plan does not match our election manifesto at all," Kitazawa told a press conference today. "But," he added, "that's wrong."

8) Foreign Minister Okada mulls visiting U.S. before President visits Japan

SANKEI (Top play) (Lead para.)
October 28, 2009

It was learned on Oct. 27 that Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada is mulling a visit to the U.S. before President Obama arrives in Japan on Nov. 12. Coordination is now under way for him to go to the U.S. on Nov. 6, according to a government source. The date was chosen taking into account the ongoing extraordinary Diet session schedule. The aim of his visit is to coordinate the two countries' views on the pending issue of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station relocation beforehand so that the confrontation between the two countries will not intensify during the presidential visit. Okada already visited the U.S. in late September right after taking office. It is very unusual (for any cabinet minister) to visit the U.S. twice in the space of only about one month.

9) Defense minister accepts Futenma relocation to Henoko; overruled immediately by PM Hatoyama

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)
October 28, 2009

Disarray between the prime minister and the concerned ministers over foreign and security policy continues in the Hatoyama cabinet. While Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa indicated on Oct. 27 his acceptance of the current plan to relocate the U.S. Marines' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan City, Okinawa, to the coastal area of Camp Schwab in Henoko, Nago City, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada both rejected this plan.

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Hatoyama gave his comments on Kitazawa's statement accepting the

Henoko relocation plan to reporters on the evening of Oct. 27. He said: "I do not necessarily share his view." He touched on the fact that the Democratic Party of Japan has been advocating the relocation of the Futenma base out of Okinawa or out of Japan and emphasized that this was a case of the defense minister jumping the gun. Hatoyama told reporters that, "I would like to spend time considering various options before reaching a conclusion."

Kitazawa told a news conference on the morning of Oct. 27 that the reason he accepts the Henoko relocation plan is because: "There are significant elements of relocation out of Okinawa or out of Japan even under the existing plan. It is wrong to think that this does not match our campaign pledge." He appeared to be trying to spearhead the argument that the plan does not contradict the DPJ's manifesto (campaign pledges) for the recent House of Representatives election, but this was overruled by the Prime Minister immediately.

Meanwhile, Okada also discussed Kitazawa's argument at a news conference on the afternoon of Oct. 27. He pointed out that "it is a bit illogical" and indicated that he will continue to look at the plan to merge the Futenma base with the U.S. forces' Kadena Air Base in Okinawa.

Commenting on the discrepancy between the statements of the Prime Minister and cabinet ministers at a news conference in the late afternoon of Oct. 27, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano voiced his complaint by saying: "The statements were made before the government has made a final decision. The ministers in charge should be more careful."

10) Former prime minister's aide testifies that USFJ real purpose for Futenma relocation is to build state-of-the-art military base

AKAHATA (Top play) (Full)
October 28, 2009

A former close aide to the prime minister testified on Oct. 27 that the purpose of the U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) in "relocating" the Futenma Air Station in Okinawa and building a new base in Henoko, Nago City, is not to reduce noise, aircraft crashes, and other damage brought about by the base, but because the USFJ "wanted a state-of-the-art military base."

A former close aide to the prime minister in the 1990s who was also a senior government official gave the above testimony on condition of anonymity. This official had been tasked by the Liberal Democratic Party government with handling Okinawa issues since the 1970s. In the 1990s, he served as the intermediary between the Tokyo government and Okinawa as the prime minister's close aide.

It is believed that this former official was deeply involved with the 1996 agreement on the return of the Futenma base and the formulation of concrete plans for the "offshore heliport" and economic development measures for Okinawa in return for accepting a new military base.

This official said: "What the U.S. Marines really wanted was to get rid of the outdated Futenma base equipped with obsolete radars and get an upgraded military base equipped with state-of-the-art technology." He said that he heard about this wish to "modernize"

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the USFJ directly from the commander of the Futenma base.

The above official pointed out that the USFJ gave top priority to the installation of the most advanced radars and demanded only the minimum required space for the helicopters' takeoffs and landings with regard to runways. He explained that runways capable of takeoffs and landings by fixed-wing aircraft were actually demanded by the Japanese side, since spending more for the construction work would benefit the local communities.

He also revealed that the prototype of the current plan to build two V-shaped runways is a "blueprint" of the U.S. military industry during the Vietnam War.

11) Defense chief mulls shifting MSDF tanker from Indian Ocean to Somalia

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)
Eve., October 27, 2009

Defense Minister Kitazawa has clarified that he is looking into the possibility of transferring a Maritime Self-Defense Force supply ship, currently engaged in refueling activities in the Indian Ocean, to the offing of Somalia in Africa after withdrawing the vessel when the current special measures law expires in January next year. Kitazawa said it is "fully conceivable" for the MSDF to refuel foreign naval vessels participating in antipiracy activities.

However, in order for the MSDF to refuel foreign naval vessels operating against pirates, the government would have to amend the existing antipiracy law. Moreover, refueling foreign naval vessels, unlike the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean as an anti-terror measure, would not be a measure for direct aid to Afghanistan.

12) Defense minister's suggestion on having MSDF engage in refueling mission off Somalia draws objections from Cabinet, SDP

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
October 28, 2009

Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa suggested on Oct. 27 a plan to have the Maritime Self-Defense Force's vessels engage in a refueling mission to support antipiracy operations off Somalia after their current mission in the Indian Ocean ends. His suggestion has drawn objections from the (Democratic Party of Japan's) coalition partner of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). This is because the defense minister announced the plan without laying the groundwork for it. Even Prime Minister Yuko Hatoyama ruled out the plan last night, saying, "I don't have such an option in mind."

The Hatoyama administration has repeatedly indicated that it will not simply extend the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. It is certain that the MSDF will be withdrawn from the Indian Ocean next January. The Defense Minister has been looking for SDF activities in Afghanistan to replace the refueling mission. But due to the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan, activities in the waters off Somalia have been suggested. Kitazawa indicated in the news conference that the use of technology and experience acquired in the Indian Ocean will make things easier for the Defense Ministry to deal with the matter.

Meanwhile, SDP Secretary General Yasumasa Shigeno harshly criticized

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Kitazawa's statement, saying, "It was an extremely careless remark. The SDF's duty is limited to defending our country. Why is he so eager to do a favor for the United States? The matter should be handled by the Japan Coast Guard."

13) Transferring supply vessel used for refueling activity in Indian Ocean to waters off Somalia would be "difficult"

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Excerpt)
October 28, 2009

Defense Minister Kitazawa at a press briefing on Oct. 27 announced a plan to look into the possibility of transferring the Maritime Self-Defense Force's supply vessel used for refueling mission in the Indian Ocean to waters off Somalia for an anti-piracy operation. However, it would be difficult to realize such a plan at an early date, because it requires an amendment to the Anti-Piracy Law, which serves as the basis for dispatching MSDF Force vessels to the Indian Ocean. Prime Minister Hatoyama on the evening of the same day indicated a negative view to reporters: "There are legal arrangements that must be made. The vessels cannot be moved easily. I do not have such a plan in mind now."

14) Prime Minister Hatoyama to move into his official residential quarters today

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 28, 2009

Today Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama will move into his official residential quarters adjacent to the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei). Up until now, he had been commuting 30 to 40 minutes by car from his private residence in Denenchofu to the Kantei. With regard to the reason for moving today in his official residence, Hatoyama said, "Because full-fledged debate will start on Oct. 28 (at the extraordinary Diet session)."

15) Japanese, Australian trade ministers agree to promote EPA negotiations

NIKKEI (Page 5) (Full)
October 28, 2009

The trade and economic ministers of Japan and Australia held their first meeting in Tokyo yesterday. Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Masayuki Naoshima and Minister for Trade Simon Crean agreed to expedite negotiations on concluding an economic partnership agreement (EPA). Regarding global warming, they confirmed the need to urge the major greenhouse gas emitters to agree on an ambitious reduction target so that an accord can be reached at the 15th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15) to be held in Copenhagen in December.

Naoshima and Crean also shared the view that government-level involvement is necessary for the new round of World Trade Organization's (WTO) trade talks (Doha Round) to come to a settlement in 2010. The governments of Japan and Australia will hold trade and economic ministerial meetings on a regular basis.

16) U.S. announces plan to hold in Japan in December preparatory meeting for Nuclear Security Summit

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MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
October 28, 2009

Thomas D'Agostino, head of the U.S. Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration, announced in an interview with media outlets in Tokyo yesterday that a preparatory meeting for the Nuclear Security Summit to be held in Washington next April by U.S. President Barack Obama will be held in Japan in December.

The Nuclear Security Summit is a forum for discussing the international management of nuclear-related materials according to the principle of nuclear nonproliferation. D'Agostino said: "The preparatory meeting will provide a good opportunity for Japan to demonstrate to the world its high expertise and long-time achievements in the peaceful use of nuclear power." According to the Foreign Ministry, themes and other details for the summit will be discussed at the preparatory meeting. The venue for the Japanese meeting has not yet been decided. Preparatory meetings may be held in several countries.

President Obama proposed holding a nuclear security summit in a speech in Prague in April. At the summit state leaders will discuss a plan to build a system designed to prevent nuclear-related materials from being delivered to nonnuclear states and terrorists and from being used to make weapons.

D'Agostino is visiting Japan to attend an international conference on nuclear safeguards (inspections) in Tokai-mura, Ibaraki Prefecture.

ROOS